

# REPORT

## **Developmental Assets: A Profile of Your Youth**

### **Racine Unified School District and Burlington Area School District**

#### ***Prepared for:***

**Racine Community Coalition for Youth  
Racine, WI**

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Search Institute will treat this report as confidential. Because the data upon which this report is based can be used to advance the understanding of adolescent development, Search Institute reserves the right to add these data to its larger Developmental Assets database. This report is based on data from *Search Institute Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes and Behaviors*, copyright © 1996 by Search Institute. For additional information, contact Search Institute's Data Services Department, 1-800-888-7828.

# I. Introduction

Search Institute's framework of Developmental Assets provides a way to assess the health and well-being of middle and high school age youth. The assets represent a common core of developmental building blocks crucial for all youth, regardless of community size, region of the country, gender, family economics, or race/ethnicity. This report summarizes the extent to which youth in your community experience these assets and how the assets relate to their behavior. These 40 Developmental Assets were assessed using the survey *Search Institute Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes and Behaviors*.

## **Developmental Assets: A Paradigm of Positive Human Development**

A litany of studies—both national and local—call attention to frighteningly high rates of alcohol and other drug use, teenage pregnancy, violence, school failure, and other concerns about adolescents. People everywhere are looking for solutions to these problems. Yet, in spite of our best intentions, we seem to be making little progress. The most common response is to seek to reduce problems through prevention programs, early intervention, and social services. Then, when all else fails, we turn to increasingly expensive treatment and/or incarceration, adding more strain to community resources and patience.

It is appropriate to try to control and reduce problems among young people. Indeed, health-compromising, future-jeopardizing, and safety-threatening behaviors must be confronted and solutions sought. And forces that threaten healthy development—such as adults who exploit youth, over-exposure to mass media, violence, poverty, and racism—must be vigorously combated. However, the problem-centered approach which relies heavily on professionals and public sector resources rarely works by itself. Despite the best intentions and valiant efforts of concerned and competent people and organizations, the problems often persist or are replaced by other problems that require still more resources.

A complementary approach is needed—one that accents healthy development and requires action by all residents of a community. This approach recognizes that a major issue in all towns and cities is that many of the core processes of healthy development are increasingly absent. These include adult support, positive intergenerational relationships, safe places, clear and consistent boundaries, participation in constructive activities, commitment to learning, consistent attention to values, and practice in serving others. The fragility of this developmental infrastructure explains many of the behavioral choices made by adolescents that trouble communities.

Strengthening, and in some cases rebuilding, this developmental infrastructure is essential for the positive development of all young people in all communities. Furthermore, everyone has a role to play. Though support from professionals and the public sector is needed, much of the responsibility and capacity for the healthy development of youth is in the hands of the people who interact with young

people every day—families, friends, neighbors, seniors, law enforcement, businesses, religious institutions, and other citizens.

Search Institute’s framework of Developmental Assets provides a way not only for assessing your youth but also for mobilizing community-wide attention to the need for the healthy development of young people.

The 40 assets and their definitions are listed in Figure 1. The assets are grouped into two major types:

1. **External assets** are positive developmental experiences that surround youth with support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, and opportunities for constructive use of time. When provided by many different formal and informal systems in a community, they stimulate and nurture positive development in youth.

2. **Internal assets** are a young person's own commitments, values, and competencies. They are grouped into categories of educational commitment, positive values, social competencies, and positive identity. Similar to the external assets, community is also important for the development of these internal assets.

The asset framework is based on years of scientific inquiry into risk and resiliency factors, as well as normal developmental processes. Researchers and evaluators at Search Institute have combined and analyzed numerous studies to create the asset framework. This research has shown that youth with higher levels of assets are significantly less likely to engage in risk-taking behaviors, such as substance use, delinquency, school truancy, or too-early sexual activity. In addition, they are more likely to exhibit indicators of thriving, such as school success and informal helping.

For more information about Search Institute's work undergirding the Developmental Asset paradigm, see Appendix C.

## How Your Study Was Done

The survey *Search Institute Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes and Behaviors* was used to measure these assets among youth in your community. Similar research has been conducted with hundreds of thousands of young people in hundreds of communities across the country.<sup>1</sup>

The survey was administered in March, 2006 to students in grades 7 through 12 at Karcher Middle School, Burlington High School, and St. Charles Grade School in Burlington, Walden III Middle School/High School, Keith R. Mack Achievement Center, The REAL School, Case High School, Holick High School, Park High School, Gilmore Middle School, Jerstad-Agerholm Middle School, McKinley Middle School, Starbuck Middle School, Mitchell Middle School, Prairie School, St. Catherine's High School, San Juan Diego Middle School, Trinity Lutheran School, and Detention

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<sup>1</sup>Early studies measured a set of 30 developmental assets. The new framework of 40 assets reflects Search Institute's ongoing commitment to increase the understanding of the developmental needs and processes of children and adolescents.

Center in Racine, WI. Standardized administration procedures were provided to school staff by Search Institute to enhance the quality of the data. To ensure complete student anonymity, no names or identification numbers were used.

Parents were notified of survey administration and given the option of withdrawing their student(s).

To create the final set of data on which these findings are based, several checks were made on individual survey responses. For this report, 435 survey(s) were eliminated due to inconsistent responses, missing data on 40 or more items, reports of unrealistically high levels of alcohol or other drug use (e.g., daily use of multiple drugs), or grades other than those intended to be surveyed. The number of surveys discarded represents 5 percent of the total number of surveys received at Search Institute. Typically between five and eight percent of surveys are discarded for these reasons. If, for any reason, the percentage of discarded surveys is greater than 10 percent, caution should be used in interpreting the results, as some bias may be present.

Another factor affecting the quality of the data is the degree to which the surveyed students represent the youth in the participating school(s). If a random sample was used, the sample needs to be large enough to appropriately represent the student population. Studies intended to assess all youth should ideally obtain data from at least 80 percent of the students. Neither method produces perfect results, but both can provide quality information about your youth.

In this report, percentages are generally reported by total group, by gender, and by grade. To protect anonymity, if data are available from fewer than 30 students per grade, percentages are reported for combinations of grades (for example 6th-7th-8th, 9th-10th, and 11th-12th). When the sample sizes at the individual grade levels are 50 youth or fewer, caution should be used in making comparisons among grades, unless the sample sizes represent the total number of youth in those grades. If all grades 6-12 were not surveyed, caution should be used in reporting the total percentages as they will not necessarily be representative of the entire population of students in grades 6-12. Characteristics of the youth participating in your study are given in Figure 2.

## **How to Use This Report**

This report contains important insights about the young people in your community. It includes information about the challenges they face and the internal strengths and external supports they have to overcome those challenges.

In reading a report such as this, there is often a tendency to debate the accuracy of individual numbers or their meanings. Some general guidelines for interpretation may be helpful. First, differences of five percent or more between grade levels or between males and females are worthy of thought and consideration. Second, it is often helpful to look for *patterns* of findings rather than to focus on a specific asset or finding, for example, does one grade or set of grades consistently report fewer assets? Third, do not overwhelm others with numbers at the risk of losing their understanding of key messages. Rather, make more use of the figures that give the overall messages such as the average number of assets your youth report.

There are many people in your community who will benefit from the information in this report. These include educators, parents, young people, youth workers, community leaders, policy makers, media, religious leaders, employers, coaches, health care providers, and so on. Use local resources or those from Search Institute to help you communicate these findings to others. Appendix D in this report lists some of the asset-building resources available from Search Institute.

Once you have shared the information with key people and groups, your community can begin the important work of asset building. This, of course, requires a long-term, community-wide effort. While this report gives a snapshot of youth at a particular point in time, asset building begins at birth and continues through childhood, adolescence, and beyond. Section V of this report highlights some ideas for getting started as an asset-building community. Once you do, you will find that there are many individuals and groups in your own community that already are involved in asset building. You also will find that many people and organizations have creative new ways to build assets. Asset building is not a program—it is a catalyst for connecting and empowering all sectors of your community.

# Figure 1: 40 Developmental Assets

## External Assets

Asset Type	Asset Name	Definition
<b>Support</b>	1. Family support	Family life provides high levels of love and support.
	2. Positive family communication	Young person and her or his parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek advice and counsel from parent(s).
	3. Other adult relationships	Young person receives support from three or more nonparent adults.
	4. Caring neighborhood	Young person experiences caring neighbors.
	5. Caring school climate	School provides a caring, encouraging environment.
	6. Parent involvement in schooling	Parent(s) are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school.
<b>Empowerment</b>	7. Community values youth	Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth.
	8. Youth as resources	Young people are given useful roles in the community.
	9. Service to others	Young person serves in the community one or more hours per week.
	10. Safety	Young person feels safe at home, at school, and in the neighborhood.
<b>Boundaries and Expectations</b>	11. Family boundaries	Family has clear rules and consequences and monitors the young person's whereabouts.
	12. School boundaries	School provides clear rules and consequences.
	13. Neighborhood boundaries	Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people's behavior.
	14. Adult role models	Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior.
	15. Positive peer influence	Young person's best friends model responsible behavior.
	16. High expectations	Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well.
<b>Constructive Use of Time</b>	17. Creative activities	Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts.
	18. Youth programs	Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in the community.
	19. Religious community	Young person spends one or more hours per week in activities in a religious institution.
	20. Time at home	Young person is out with friends "with nothing special to do" two or fewer nights per week.

**Figure 1: 40 Developmental Assets (Cont'd)**

<b>Internal Assets</b>		
<b>Asset Type</b>	<b>Asset Name</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Commitment to Learning</b>	21. Achievement motivation 22. School engagement 23. Homework  24. Bonding to school 25. Reading for pleasure	Young person is motivated to do well in school. Young person is actively engaged in learning. Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day. Young person cares about her or his school. Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week.
<b>Positive Values</b>	26. Caring 27. Equality and social justice  28. Integrity  29. Honesty 30. Responsibility 31. Restraint	Young person places high value on helping other people. Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty. Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs. Young person "tells the truth even when it is not easy." Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility. Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.
<b>Social Competencies</b>	32. Planning and decision making 33. Interpersonal competence  34. Cultural competence  35. Resistance skills  36. Peaceful conflict resolution	Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices. Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills. Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds. Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations. Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.
<b>Positive Identity</b>	37. Personal power  38. Self-esteem 39. Sense of purpose 40. Positive view of personal future	Young person feels he or she has control over "things that happen to me." Young person reports having a high self-esteem. Young person reports that "my life has a purpose." Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future.

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## Figure 2: Who Was Surveyed

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		Number of Youth	Percent of Total
<b>Total Sample</b>		8298	100
<hr/>			
<b>Gender*</b>	Male	3899	47
	Female	4320	53
<hr/>			
<b>Grade*</b>	6	0	0
	7	1409	17
	8	1491	18
	9	1618	20
	10	1567	19
	11	1276	15
	12	927	11
<hr/>			
<b>Race / Ethnicity*</b>	American Indian	69	1
	Asian / Pacific Islander	124	2
	Black / African American	1045	13
	Hispanic	952	12
	White	5131	62
	Multi-racial	922	11

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\*Numbers may not sum to "Total Sample" due to missing information.

## II. Portrait of Developmental Assets

In this section information about your young people's assets is presented in various forms. Both the average number of assets your youth report plus the percentage of youth who report each asset are noted. Whether or not a youth is said to have an asset is based on how he or she answered the questions that measure the asset. (See Appendix B for more information on which survey items measure each asset. See Appendix A for information on how your youth responded to each survey item.) In order to simplify reporting and focus attention on overall trends, all assets are assessed as either present or absent in a youth's life. In reality, of course, youth experience assets in degrees, not all or nothing.

Figure 3 shows the average number of assets for all youth combined, as well as by grade. In order to motivate and challenge your community, you may want to create a shared vision for the average number of assets you want your youth to experience. This approach reminds citizens that there are many different asset combinations that contribute to the healthy development of youth. When a majority of youth experience an asset, it becomes accepted and normative.

### External Assets

Figures 4 and 5 show the overall percentages of youth who report each *external* asset as well as the percentages by grade and gender. The external assets are the positive experiences and support a young person receives from formal and informal connections to others in the community. There are 20 external assets, divided into four categories: **support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, and constructive use of time.**

The **SUPPORT** assets refer to the way young people experience love, affirmation, and acceptance. Ideally, young people experience an abundance of support not only in their families but also from many other people in the community.

The **EMPOWERMENT** assets relate to the key developmental need for youth to be valued and valuable. The empowerment assets highlight this need, focusing on community perceptions of youth (as reported by youth), and opportunities for youth to contribute to society in meaningful ways.

**BOUNDARIES AND EXPECTATIONS** assets refer to the need for youth to have clear and enforced boundaries to complement support and empowerment. Ideally, boundary assets are experienced in the settings of family, school, and neighborhood, providing a set of consistent messages about appropriate and acceptable behavior across socializing systems.

The final category of external assets is **CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF TIME**. One of the prime characteristics of a healthy community for youth is a rich array of structured opportunities for children and adolescents. Whether through schools, community organizations, or religious institutions, these structured activities contribute to the development of many of the internal and external assets.

## Internal Assets

Figures 6 and 7 show the overall percentage of youth with each *internal* asset and the percentage by grade and gender. The internal assets are those things a community and family nurture within youth so they can contribute to their own development. There are 20 internal assets divided into four categories: **commitment to learning**, **positive values**, **social competencies**, and **a positive identity**.

**COMMITMENT TO LEARNING** is essential to young people in today's changing world. Developing an internal intellectual curiosity and the skills to gain new knowledge and learn from experience are important characteristics for a workforce that must adapt to rapid change.

**POSITIVE VALUES** are important "internal compasses" to guide young people's priorities and choices. Though there are many values that we seek to nurture, the asset framework focuses on six values known to both help prevent high risk behaviors *and* promote caring for others.

**SOCIAL COMPETENCIES** reflect the important personal skills young people need to negotiate through the maze of choices and options they face. These skills also lay a foundation for independence and competence as young adults.

**POSITIVE IDENTITY** assets focus on young people's view of themselves—their own sense of power, purpose, worth, and promise. Without these assets, young people risk feeling powerless and without a sense of initiative and purpose.

## Deficits

Assets form part of the developmental infrastructure on which healthy lives are built. Deficits are countervailing influences that can interfere with a youth's healthy development, limiting access to external assets, blocking development of internal assets, or easing the way into risky behavioral choices. Deficits are negative influences, none of which necessarily does permanent harm, but each of which makes harm more possible.

## Figure Descriptions

**Figure 3:** The average number of 40 assets your youth report, for the total sample and by grade level. Each student's responses are analyzed to determine whether he/she has each asset. The number of assets are then averaged across groups (total sample and grade level). Past evidence indicates that the number of reported assets is relatively similar across grades. Attention should be focused on increasing the number of assets your youth report.

**Questions to consider:** What is the average number of assets reported by your youth? How do the number of assets compare across grades? Are there any grades reporting low numbers of assets?

**Figure 4:** The percentage of your surveyed youth reporting each of 20 external assets, listed under four general external asset categories. This bar graph gives a visual presentation of the differences in percentages in the external assets.

**Questions to consider:** Where are the strengths and needs of your youth with respect to external assets; that is, which assets do more of your youth report, and which do fewer report? Are there some *categories* of assets that are particularly high or low in general?

**Figure 5:** The percentage of your surveyed youth reporting each of 20 external assets, for the total sample, by gender, and by grade. The 20 external assets are listed under the four general external asset categories. You will notice that the percentages for the total sample correspond to those presented graphically in Figure 4.

**Questions to consider:** Are there differences between males and females? Do females report certain external assets more than males, and vice versa? Are there certain grades reporting consistently higher or lower levels of external assets?

**Figure 6:** The percentage of your surveyed youth reporting each of 20 internal assets, listed under the four general internal asset categories. This bar graph gives a visual presentation of the differences in percentages in the internal assets.

**Questions to consider:** Where are the strengths and needs of your youth with respect to internal assets; that is, which assets do more youth report, and which do fewer report? Are there some *categories* of assets that are particularly high or low in general?

**Figure 7:** The percentage of your surveyed youth reporting each of 20 internal assets, for the total sample, by gender, and by grade. The 20 internal assets are listed under the four general internal asset categories. You will notice that the percentages for the total sample correspond to those presented graphically in Figure 6.

**Questions to consider:** Are there differences between males and females? Do females report certain internal assets more than males, and vice versa? Are there certain grades reporting consistently higher or lower levels of internal assets?

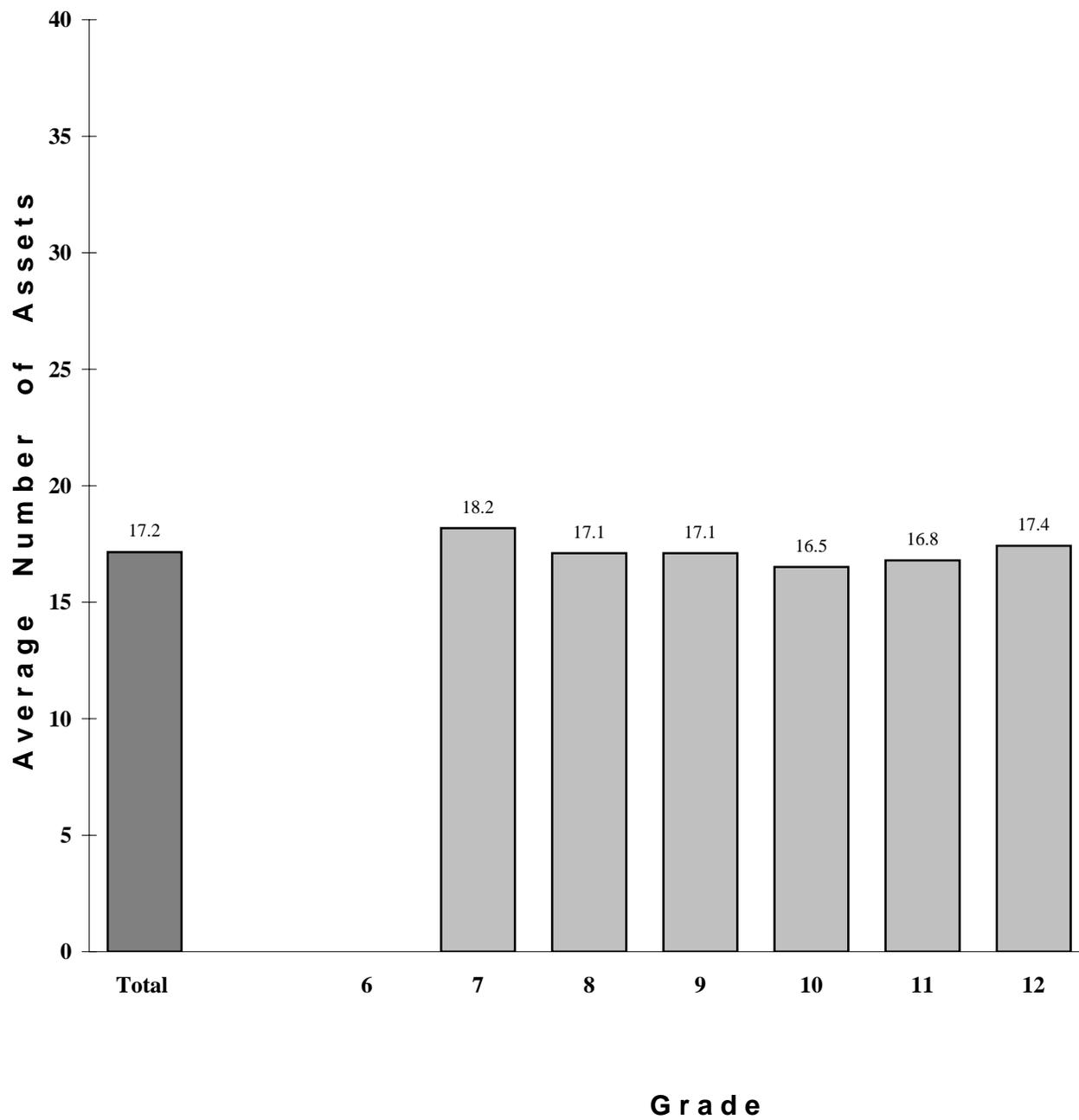
**Figure 8:** The percentage of your surveyed youth reporting each of five developmental deficits, for the total sample, by gender, and by grade. Each of these deficits can interfere with the development of assets. Each also is correlated with high-risk behavior. Although this report advocates community-based efforts to promote Developmental Assets, communities must also focus attention on preventing these and related deficits (e.g., poverty, racism, exclusion).

***Questions to consider:*** What percentage of your youth are reporting these deficits? Are there differences between males and females, or across grade levels? How do these differences in deficits relate to the differences in the assets you have already detected?

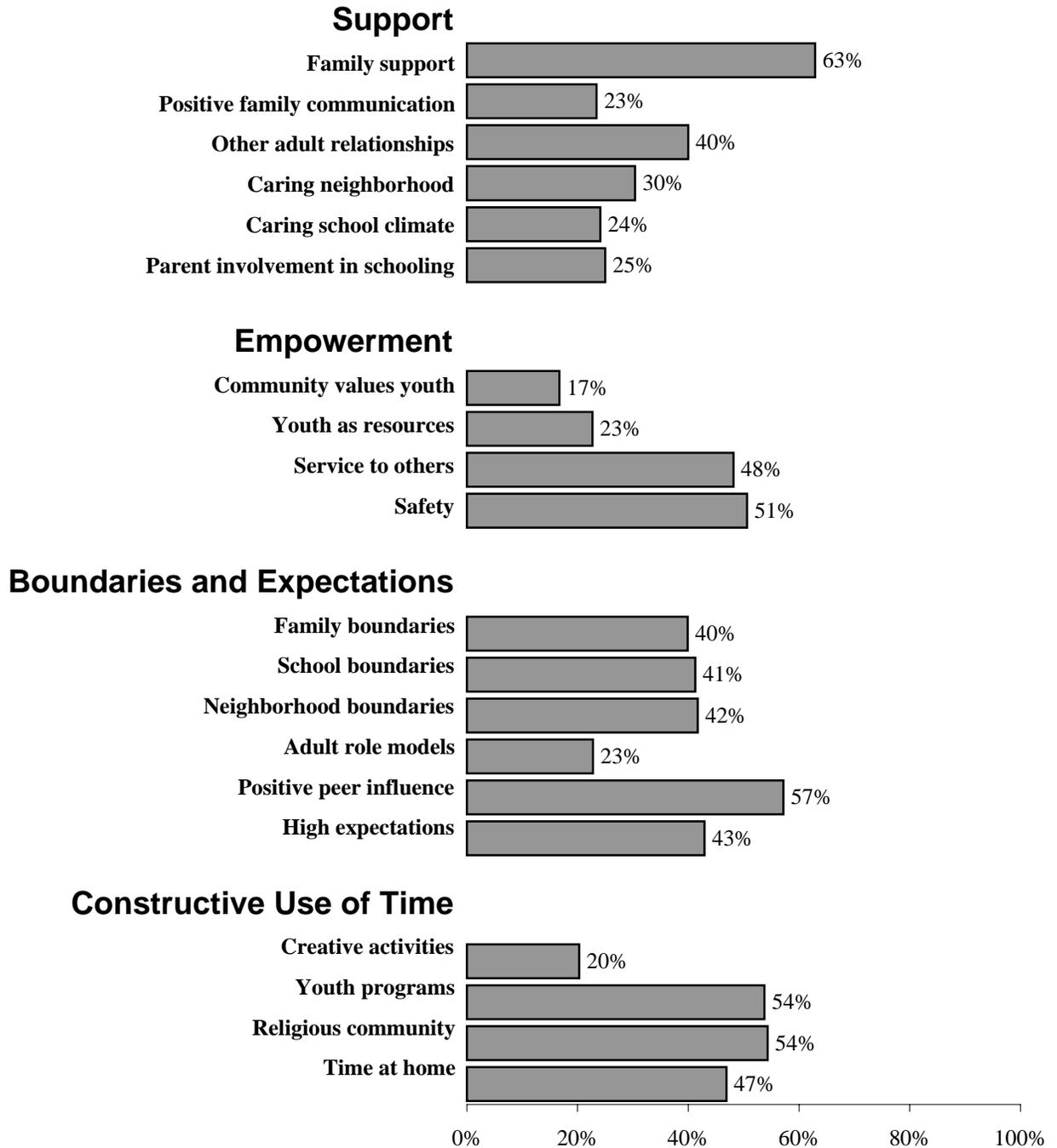
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**Figure 3: Average Number of 40 Assets**

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**Figure 4: Percent of Youth Reporting Each of 20 External Assets**

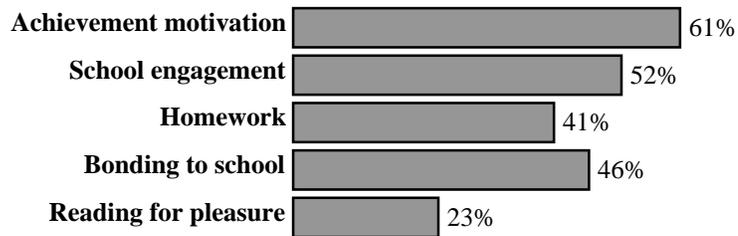


**Figure 5: Percent of Youth Reporting Each External Asset, by Gender and Grade**

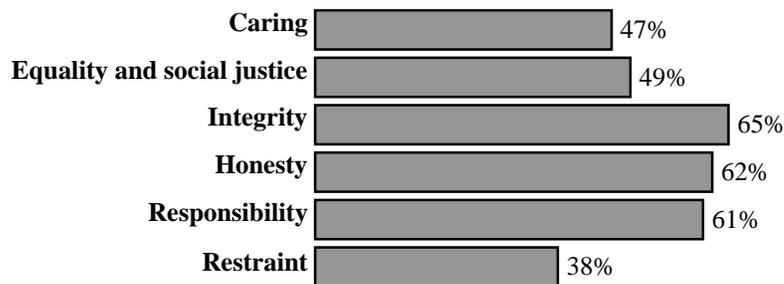
External Asset	Total Sample	Gender		Grade						
		M	F	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
<b>Support</b>										
1. Family support	63	62	63	70	65	63	60	58	62	
2. Positive family communication	23	22	25	29	25	25	21	19	20	
3. Other adult relationships	40	37	42	37	39	41	39	41	45	
4. Caring neighborhood	30	29	32	38	31	34	27	26	25	
5. Caring school climate	24	22	26	28	25	24	21	22	26	
6. Parent involvement in schooling	25	25	25	37	29	27	20	17	14	
<b>Empowerment</b>										
7. Community values youth	17	15	18	24	19	18	12	13	12	
8. Youth as resources	23	22	23	28	22	24	21	19	21	
9. Service to others	48	42	54	49	46	49	47	48	51	
10. Safety	51	60	42	41	49	51	52	54	59	
<b>Boundaries and Expectations</b>										
11. Family boundaries	40	37	42	42	41	40	40	40	36	
12. School boundaries	41	40	43	53	50	38	36	35	30	
13. Neighborhood boundaries	42	41	42	50	45	42	37	38	35	
14. Adult role models	23	19	27	24	23	23	20	23	25	
15. Positive peer influence	57	54	61	69	59	57	54	51	52	
16. High expectations	43	42	44	52	48	41	39	37	39	
<b>Constructive Use of Time</b>										
17. Creative activities	20	16	25	20	21	20	21	19	19	
18. Youth programs	54	54	54	50	52	54	55	54	57	
19. Religious community	54	50	58	59	57	55	52	51	49	
20. Time at home	47	47	47	53	50	50	44	42	40	

**Figure 6: Percent of Youth Reporting Each of 20 Internal Assets**

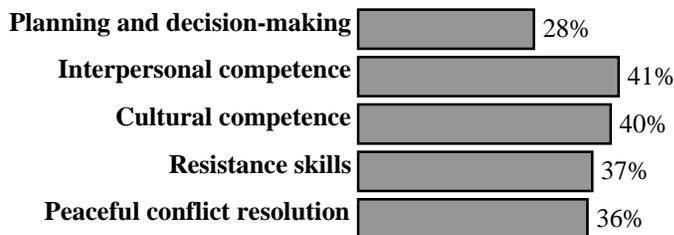
**Commitment to Learning**



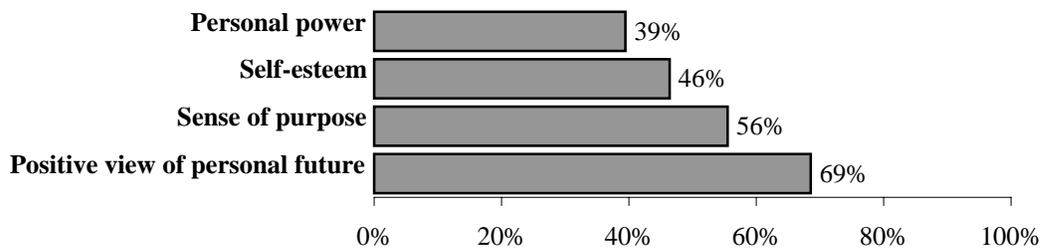
**Positive Values**



**Social Competencies**



**Positive Identity**



**Figure 7: Percent of Youth Reporting Each Internal Asset, by Gender and Grade**

Internal Asset	Total Sample	Gender		Grade						
		M	F	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
<b>Commitment to Learning</b>										
21. Achievement motivation	61	53	68	62	60	59	61	61	64	
22. School engagement	52	45	58	52	49	49	50	53	59	
23. Homework	41	34	47	38	35	38	45	49	43	
24. Bonding to school	46	43	49	47	43	52	45	45	46	
25. Reading for pleasure	23	18	27	21	21	25	22	23	28	
<b>Positive Values</b>										
26. Caring	47	36	56	49	46	44	43	50	50	
27. Equality and social justice	49	39	59	54	53	48	45	50	47	
28. Integrity	65	56	73	60	62	64	66	69	72	
29. Honesty	62	55	69	62	60	59	61	66	70	
30. Responsibility	61	55	66	58	58	59	61	67	67	
31. Restraint	38	33	43	58	48	37	32	25	21	
<b>Social Competencies</b>										
32. Planning and decision-making	28	24	31	25	21	26	28	32	38	
33. Interpersonal competence	41	26	55	41	38	40	41	42	47	
34. Cultural competence	40	33	46	44	40	39	37	40	37	
35. Resistance skills	37	32	41	43	36	35	33	34	41	
36. Peaceful conflict resolution	36	27	44	35	33	37	34	38	42	
<b>Positive Identity</b>										
37. Personal power	39	39	40	33	35	39	41	44	48	
38. Self-esteem	46	51	42	45	47	46	44	45	52	
39. Sense of purpose	56	60	52	53	52	57	56	56	62	
40. Positive view of personal future	69	67	70	69	68	68	69	67	71	

**Figure 8: Percent of Youth Reporting Each of 5 Deficits, by Gender and Grade**

Deficit	Definition	Total Sample	Gender		Grade					
			M	F	6	7	8	9	10	11
<b>Alone at Home</b>	Two hours or more per school day	49	47	51	41	47	48	51	54	57
<b>TV Overexposure</b>	Watches TV or videos three or more hours per school day	37	39	35	43	42	36	34	32	30
<b>Physical Abuse</b>	Reports one or more incidents, "have you ever been physically harmed (that is, where someone caused you to have a scar, black and blue marks, welts, bleeding, or a broken bone) by someone in your family or someone living with you?"	29	29	30	29	33	31	28	30	24
<b>Victim of Violence</b>	Reports one or more incidents, "how many times in the last 2 years have you been the victim of physical violence where someone caused you physical pain or injury?"	31	35	28	32	35	33	31	29	25
<b>Drinking Parties</b>	Reports attending one or more parties in the last year "where other kids your age were drinking."	51	49	53	25	38	48	61	70	74

### III: Portrait of Risk-Taking Behaviors and Thriving Indicators

There is growing concern in the United States about the increase in negative and potentially life-threatening behaviors among our young people as well as a decrease in positive, health-promoting behaviors. This section presents information about your youth's involvement in each of 24 risk-taking behaviors. Also measured is the extent to which your youth report each of eight thriving indicators, which are commonly valued and accepted as important elements of healthy development.

Perhaps more important than your youth's involvement in individual acts of risk-taking are *patterns of high-risk behavior*—repeated involvement in behaviors that compromise a young person's well-being. For example, a young person who reports using alcohol once or more in the past month is considered to be involved in risk-taking behavior. However, a young person who has used alcohol *three* or more times in the past month (almost once a week) is engaging in a high-risk pattern of behavior and is even more likely to experience negative consequences related to the behavior.

#### Figure Descriptions

**Figure 9:** The percentage of your surveyed youth reporting each of nine risk-taking behaviors related specifically to alcohol, tobacco, and/or other drug use. The figure presents the risk-taking behaviors and how these behaviors are defined within the survey. Percentages are also reported for each behavior by gender and by grade.

**Questions to consider:** What percentage of your youth are reporting these substance-related risk-taking behaviors? Are there differences between males and females, or across grade levels? How do these differences relate to the differences in the assets or the deficits you have already detected?

**Figure 10:** The percentage of your surveyed youth reporting each of 15 other risk-taking behaviors, such as anti-social behavior and gambling. The figure presents the risk-taking behaviors and how these behaviors are defined within the survey. Percentages are also reported for each behavior by gender and by grade.

**Questions to consider:** What percentages of your youth are reporting these risk-taking behaviors? Are there differences between males and females, or across grade levels? How do these differences relate to the differences in the assets or the deficits you have already detected?

**Figure 11:** The percentage of your surveyed youth reporting problematic levels of 10 high-risk behavior patterns. The figure presents the high-risk behavior patterns and how these patterns are defined within the survey. Essentially, the high-risk behavior patterns represent higher incidence levels

of the previously reported 24 risk behaviors; and, in many cases, combinations of related risk behaviors are used to define a pattern. Percentages are also reported for each pattern by gender and by grade.

**Questions to consider:** What percentage of your youth are reporting these high-risk behavior patterns? Are there differences between males and females, or across grade levels? How do these differences relate to the differences in the assets or the deficits you have already detected?

**Figure 12:** The percentage of your surveyed youth reporting each of eight thriving indicators, ranging from affirmation of diversity to school success. The figure presents the thriving indicators and how they are defined within the survey. Percentages are also reported for each thriving indicator by gender and by grade.

**Questions to consider:** What percentage of your youth report these thriving indicators? Are there differences between males and females, or across grade levels? How do these differences in thriving relate to the differences in the assets, deficits, or risk-taking behaviors that you have already detected?

**Figure 9: Percent of Youth Reporting Each of 9 Substance Use Related Risk-Taking Behaviors, by Gender and Grade**

Risk-Taking Behavior		Total	Gender		Grade						
Category	Definition	Sample	M	F	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
<b>Alcohol</b>	Used alcohol once or more in the last 30 days	34	35	33	18	27	32	36	47	50	
	Got drunk once or more in the last two weeks	22	24	20	12	17	20	24	31	33	
<b>Tobacco</b>	Smoked cigarettes once or more in the last 30 days	15	15	15	8	12	14	16	22	19	
	Used smokeless tobacco once or more in the last 12 months	4	7	2	2	2	5	5	7	7	
<b>Inhalants</b>	Sniffed or inhaled substances to get high once or more in the last 12 months	8	8	8	16	13	7	5	4	3	
<b>Marijuana</b>	Used marijuana once or more in the last 12 months	24	26	22	12	18	23	30	33	31	
<b>Other Drug Use</b>	Used other illicit drugs once or more in the last 12 months*	8	9	7	4	7	8	10	11	9	
<b>Driving and Alcohol</b>	Drove after drinking once or more in the last 12 months	12	13	10	3	7	7	11	22	27	
	Rode (once or more in the last 12 months) with a driver who had been drinking	40	39	41	37	44	37	40	40	43	

\* Includes cocaine, LSD, PCP or angel dust, heroin, and amphetamines

**Figure 10: Percent of Youth Reporting Each of 15 Other Risk-Taking Behaviors, by Gender and Grade**

Risk-Taking Behavior		Total Sample	Gender		Grade					
Category	Definition		M	F	6	7	8	9	10	11
<b>Sexual Intercourse</b>	Has had sexual intercourse one or more times	33	36	31	17	22	26	38	50	57
<b>Anti-Social Behavior</b>	Shoplifted once or more in the last 12 months	28	31	25	23	30	27	29	31	27
	Committed vandalism once or more in the last 12 months	22	31	14	22	26	24	23	19	17
	Got into trouble with police once or more in the last 12 months	32	41	25	27	34	32	33	35	33
<b>Violence</b>	Hit someone once or more in the last 12 months	43	53	33	48	50	43	41	36	33
	Physically hurt someone once or more in the last 12 months	19	26	13	21	26	20	19	15	11
	Used a weapon to get something from a person once or more in the last 12 months	6	8	4	5	7	6	7	4	3
	Been in a group fight once or more in the last 12 months	25	31	20	28	32	27	24	21	16
	Carried a weapon for protection once or more in the last 12 months	16	24	9	16	19	17	17	13	14
	Threatened physical harm to someone once or more in the last 12 months	37	44	31	35	41	38	38	37	31
<b>School Truancy</b>	Skipped school once or more in the last four weeks	28	27	29	19	22	26	28	35	40
<b>Gambling</b>	Gambled once or more in the last 12 months	37	52	24	35	39	35	36	36	45
<b>Eating Disorder</b>	Has engaged in bulimic or anorexic behavior	16	14	18	16	14	17	15	18	17
<b>Depression</b>	Felt sad or depressed most or all of the time in the last month	18	13	22	18	17	18	18	20	15
<b>Attempted Suicide</b>	Has attempted suicide one or more times	16	11	21	16	18	17	16	17	14

**Figure 11: Percent of Youth Reporting Each of 10 High-Risk Behavior Patterns, by Gender and Grade**

High-Risk Behavior Pattern		Total Sample	Gender		Grade						
Category	Definition		M	F	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
<b>Alcohol</b>	Has used alcohol three or more times in the last 30 days or got drunk once or more in the last two weeks	25	27	23		13	19	23	27	35	38
<b>Tobacco</b>	Smokes one or more cigarettes every day or uses chewing tobacco frequently	9	9	8		3	5	8	11	15	12
<b>Illicit Drugs</b>	Used illicit drugs three or more times in the last 12 months*	18	20	16		6	13	17	24	26	24
<b>Sexual Intercourse</b>	Has had sexual intercourse three or more times in lifetime	23	24	23		8	11	15	28	40	48
<b>Depression/ Suicide</b>	Is frequently depressed and/or has attempted suicide	26	19	32		26	26	26	26	28	23
<b>Anti-Social Behavior</b>	Has been involved in three or more incidents of shoplifting, trouble with police, or vandalism in the last 12 months	25	32	18		21	27	25	25	27	23
<b>Violence</b>	Has engaged in three or more acts of fighting, hitting, injuring a person, carrying or using a weapon, or threatening physical harm in the last 12 months	39	49	30		40	44	40	39	34	31
<b>School Problems</b>	Has skipped school two or more days in the last four weeks and/or has below a C average	26	27	26		21	24	27	26	30	32
<b>Driving and Alcohol</b>	Has driven after drinking or ridden with a drinking driver three or more times in the last 12 months	20	20	19		15	20	18	19	23	24
<b>Gambling</b>	Has gambled three or more times in the last 12 months	19	31	9		15	19	18	19	20	26

\* Includes cocaine, LSD, PCP or angel dust, heroin, marijuana, and amphetamines

**Figure 12: Percent of Youth Reporting Each of 8 Thriving Indicators, by Gender and Grade**

Thriving Indicator	Definition	Total Sample	Gender		Grade					
			M	F	6	7	8	9	10	11
<b>Succeeds in School</b>	Gets mostly As on report card	22	18	26	22	20	21	22	20	31
<b>Helps Others</b>	Helps friends or neighbors one or more hours per week	78	73	83	78	75	80	78	79	79
<b>Values Diversity</b>	Places high importance on getting to know people of other racial/ethnic groups	59	51	66	64	63	58	55	57	55
<b>Maintains Good Health</b>	Pays attention to healthy nutrition and exercise	52	51	52	56	52	54	51	48	47
<b>Exhibits Leadership</b>	Has been a leader of a group or organization in the last 12 months	66	64	68	63	64	65	64	71	75
<b>Resists Danger</b>	Avoids doing things that are dangerous	23	16	30	27	21	24	21	22	24
<b>Delays Gratification</b>	Saves money for something special rather than spending it all right away	43	46	41	48	41	42	41	43	47
<b>Overcomes Adversity</b>	Does not give up when things get difficult	69	71	67	67	67	68	71	71	72

## IV: The Power of Developmental Assets

Fortunately, the choices young people make about how to act, what to do, and who to be are not made simply by chance. Their decisions are made based on a web of external and internal influences, including the Developmental Assets. The figures in this section reflect how the assets they experience influence the choices they make regarding the risk-taking behaviors and thriving indicators described in section III.

Search Institute's studies have consistently shown that young people who experience more of the assets engage in fewer risk-taking behaviors, and are more likely to report indicators of thriving. In other words, the more assets a young person experiences, the more likely he or she will choose a healthy lifestyle. This has been shown to be true regardless of age, race, gender, or region of the country. It is likely that the data about your youth will follow this same pattern.

### Figure Descriptions

**Figure 13:** Average number of risk-taking behaviors by asset levels. This bar graph illustrates the powerful effect of assets on risk-taking behaviors among your youth. Your youth were first categorized by the total number of assets each reported (0-10, 11-20, 21-30, 31-40), and then the average number of the 24 risk-taking behaviors was calculated. Likely your data reflect a higher average number of risk-taking behaviors among those students with lower levels of assets.

*Questions to consider:* Do assets make a difference for your youth? Do your youth follow the normative pattern of decreasing levels of risk-taking behaviors with higher levels of assets?

**Figure 14:** The protective consequences of Developmental Assets—the percentage of your surveyed youth reporting each of nine risk-taking behaviors related specifically to alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use. These findings are based on the total sample, reported by asset level. This figure, similar to Figure 9, presents the risk-taking behaviors and how these behaviors are defined within the survey. In addition, percentages are reported for each behavior by the four levels of assets (0-10, 11-20, 21-30, 31-40 assets). Typically there has been strong and consistent evidence that youth reporting more assets also report fewer risk-taking behaviors.

*Questions to consider:* What is the general pattern of risk-taking behaviors as you move across asset levels? Is the pattern consistent with what Search Institute has seen in its studies?

**Figure 15:** The protective consequences of Developmental Assets—the percentage of your surveyed youth reporting each of 15 risk-taking behaviors related to potentially harmful actions. The figure, similar to Figure 10, presents the risk-taking behaviors and how these behaviors are defined within the survey, together with the total sample percentage for each. In addition, percentages for each

behavior are reported by asset level (0-10, 11-20, 21-30, and 31-40 assets). Typically there has been strong and consistent evidence that youth reporting more assets also report fewer of these risk-taking behaviors.

**Questions to consider:** What is the general pattern of risk-taking behaviors as you move across asset levels? Is the pattern consistent with what has been found in Search Institute's studies, or with what you would expect?

**Figure 16:** The protective consequences of Developmental Assets—the percentage of your surveyed youth reporting each of 10 high-risk behavior patterns. The findings are reported for the total sample and by asset level. The figure, similar to Figure 11, presents the high-risk behaviors and how they are defined within the survey, together with the total sample percentage reporting each pattern. In addition, percentages are reported by asset level (0-10, 11-20, 21-30, 31-40 assets). Historically there has been strong and consistent evidence that youth reporting more assets also report fewer high-risk behaviors.

**Questions to consider:** What is the general pattern of high-risk behaviors as you move across asset levels? Is the pattern consistent with what has been found in Search Institute's studies or with what you would expect?

**Figure 17:** Average number of eight thriving indicators by asset level. Just as assets protect, they also promote. As this bar graph shows, youth with more assets generally report higher average levels on the eight thriving indicators.

**Questions to consider:** Do assets make a difference for your youth? Do your youth follow the normative pattern of increasing levels of thriving indicators with higher levels of assets?

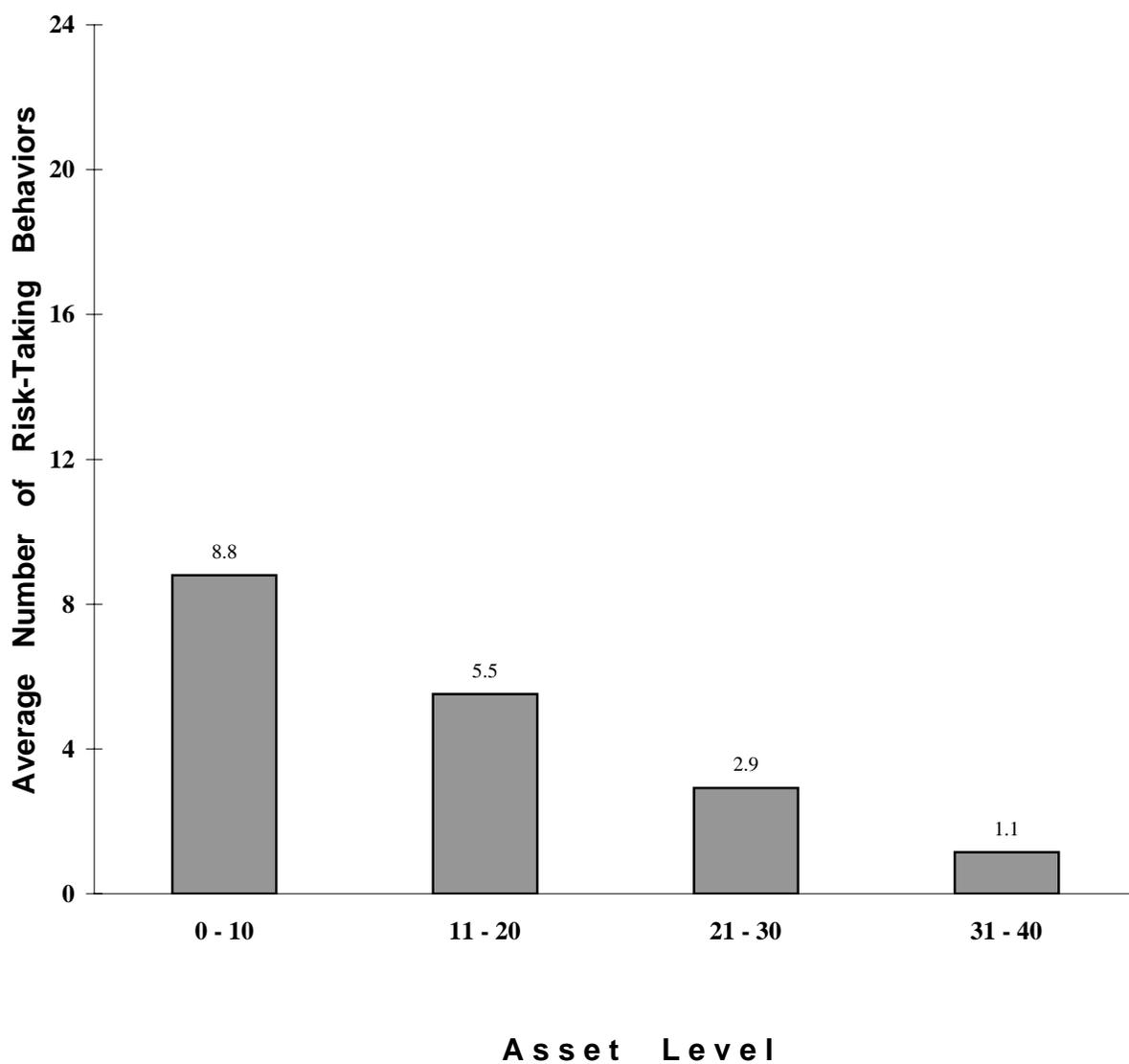
**Figure 18:** The positive consequences of Developmental Assets—the percentage of your surveyed youth reporting each of eight thriving indicators. These findings are reported for the total sample and by asset level. The figure, similar to Figure 12, presents the thriving indicators and how they are defined within the survey, together with the overall percentage of the total sample reporting each. In addition, percentages are reported by asset level (0-10, 11-20, 21-30, 31-40 assets). Strong and consistent evidence indicates that youth who report more assets also report more thriving indicators.

**Questions to consider:** What is the pattern of thriving indicators as you move across asset levels? Is the pattern consistent with what has been found in Search Institute's studies or with what you would expect?

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**Figure 13: Average Number of 24 Risk-Taking Behaviors, by Asset Level**

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**Figure 14: Percent of Youth Reporting Each of 9 Substance Use Related Risk-Taking Behaviors, by Asset Level**

Risk-Taking Behavior		Total Sample	Number of Assets			
Category	Definition		0-10	11-20	21-30	31-40
<b>Alcohol</b>	Used alcohol once or more in the last 30 days	34	53	36	21	7
	Got drunk once or more in the last two weeks	22	38	23	9	3
<b>Tobacco</b>	Smoked cigarettes once or more in the last 30 days	15	31	14	5	1
	Used smokeless tobacco once or more in the last 12 months	4	9	4	2	0
<b>Inhalants</b>	Sniffed or inhaled substances to get high once or more in the last 12 months	8	17	8	3	1
<b>Marijuana</b>	Used marijuana once or more in the last 12 months	24	44	25	10	3
<b>Other Drug Use</b>	Used other illicit drugs once or more in the last 12 months†	8	18	7	2	1
<b>Driving and Alcohol</b>	Drove after drinking once or more in the last 12 months	12	20	12	5	2
	Rode (once or more in the last 12 months) with a driver who had been drinking	40	57	42	28	15

† Includes cocaine, LSD, PCP or angel dust, heroin, and amphetamines

**Figure 15: Percent of Youth Reporting Each of 15 Other Risk-Taking Behaviors, by Asset Level**

Risk-Taking Behavior		Total	Number of Assets			
Category	Definition	Sample	0-10	11-20	21-30	31-40
<b>Sexual Intercourse</b>	Has had sexual intercourse one or more times	33	49	36	20	7
<b>Anti-Social Behavior</b>	Shoplifted once or more in the last 12 months	28	46	28	14	5
	Committed vandalism once or more in the last 12 months	22	44	21	8	2
	Got into trouble with police once or more in the last 12 months	32	53	32	17	4
<b>Violence</b>	Hit someone once or more in the last 12 months	43	61	45	27	13
	Physically hurt someone once or more in the last 12 months	19	32	19	10	4
	Used a weapon to get something from a person once or more in the last 12 months	6	12	5	1	1
	Been in a group fight once or more in the last 12 months	25	41	25	14	5
	Carried a weapon for protection once or more in the last 12 months	16	30	16	6	2
	Threatened physical harm to someone once or more in the last 12 months	37	58	40	21	9
<b>School Truancy</b>	Skipped school once or more in the last four weeks	28	43	29	15	5
<b>Gambling</b>	Gambled once or more in the last 12 months	37	49	40	27	15
<b>Eating Disorder</b>	Has engaged in bulimic or anorexic behavior	16	22	17	12	5
<b>Depression</b>	Felt sad or depressed most or all of the time in the last month	18	29	19	10	2
<b>Attempted Suicide</b>	Has attempted suicide one or more times	16	29	17	9	3

**Figure 16: Percent of Youth Reporting Each of 10 High-Risk Behavior Patterns, by Asset Level**

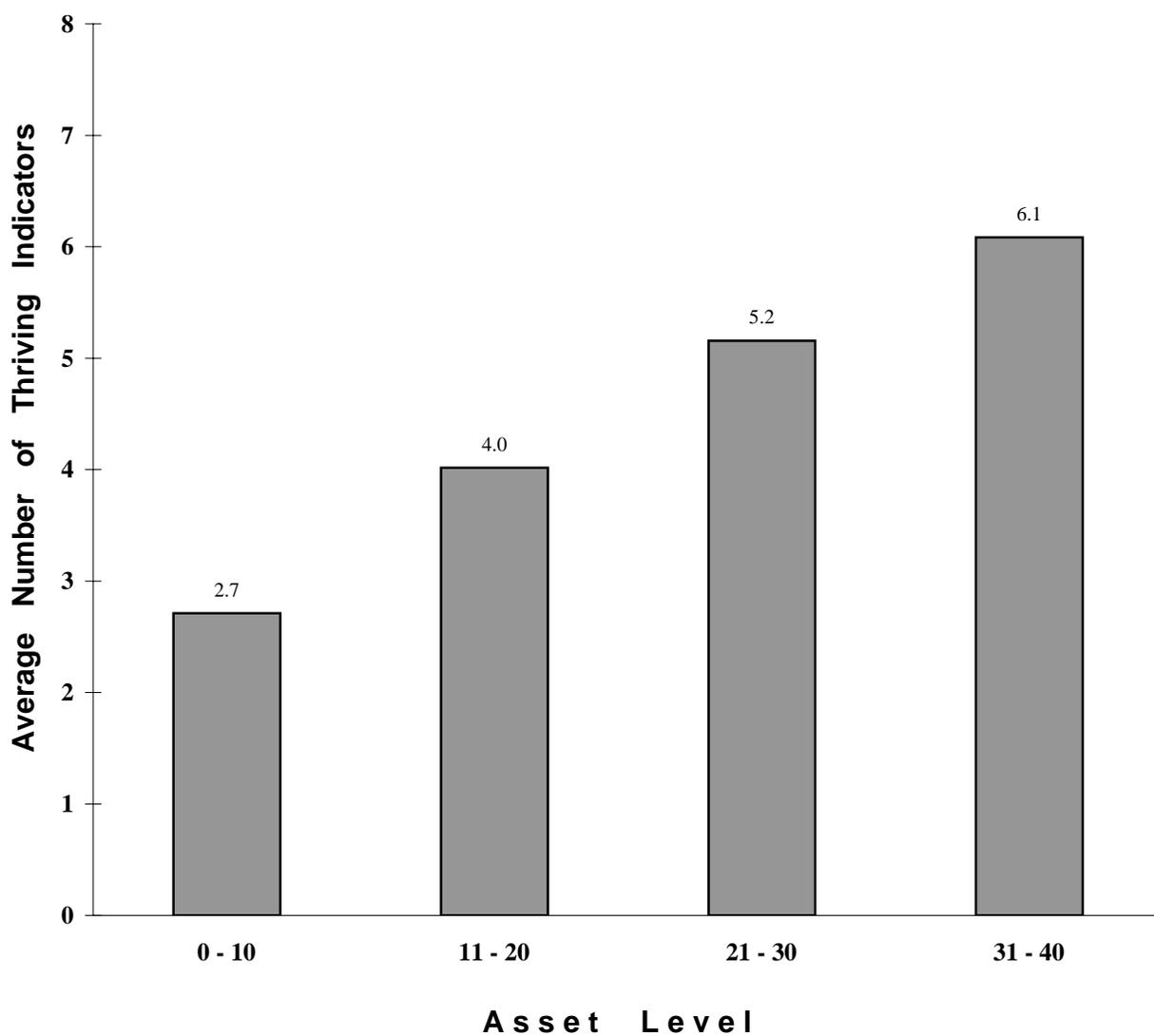
High-Risk Behavior Pattern		Total Sample	Number of Assets			
Category	Definition		0-10	11-20	21-30	31-40
<b>Alcohol</b>	Has used alcohol three or more times in the last 30 days or got drunk once or more in the last two weeks	25	43	26	11	4
<b>Tobacco</b>	Smokes one or more cigarettes every day or uses chewing tobacco frequently	9	20	8	2	1
<b>Illicit Drugs</b>	Used illicit drugs three or more times in the last 12 months†	18	36	18	6	2
<b>Sexual Intercourse</b>	Has had sexual intercourse three or more times in lifetime	23	34	25	14	6
<b>Depression/ Suicide</b>	Is frequently depressed and/or has attempted suicide	26	43	27	15	5
<b>Anti-Social Behavior</b>	Has been involved in three or more incidents of shoplifting, trouble with police, or vandalism in the last 12 months	25	48	24	9	2
<b>Violence</b>	Has engaged in three or more acts of fighting, hitting, injuring a person, carrying or using a weapon, or threatening physical harm in the last 12 months	39	60	41	21	9
<b>School Problems</b>	Has skipped school two or more days in the last four weeks and/or has below a C average	26	45	27	13	2
<b>Driving and Alcohol</b>	Has driven after drinking or ridden with a drinking driver three or more times in the last 12 months	20	33	20	9	5
<b>Gambling</b>	Has gambled three or more times in the last 12 months	19	28	20	12	6

† Includes cocaine, LSD, PCP or angel dust, heroin, marijuana, and amphetamines

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**Figure 17: Average Number of 8 Thriving Indicators, by Asset Level**

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**Figure 18: Percent of Youth Reporting Each of 8 Thriving Indicators, by Asset Level**

Thriving Indicator	Definition	Total Sample	Number of Assets			
			0-10	11-20	21-30	31-40
<b>Succeeds in School</b>	Gets mostly As on report card	22	8	19	35	52
<b>Helps Others</b>	Helps friends or neighbors one or more hours per week	78	61	79	89	94
<b>Values Diversity</b>	Places high importance on getting to know people of other racial/ethnic groups	59	33	59	74	86
<b>Maintains Good Health</b>	Pays attention to healthy nutrition and exercise	52	28	47	70	87
<b>Exhibits Leadership</b>	Has been a leader of a group or organization in the last 12 months	66	48	66	80	86
<b>Resists Danger</b>	Avoids doing things that are dangerous	23	9	21	33	46
<b>Delays Gratification</b>	Saves money for something special rather than spending it all right away	43	27	41	57	71
<b>Overcomes Adversity</b>	Does not give up when things get difficult	69	56	69	77	87

## V. From Awareness to Action

### The Challenge

In all communities across the country, Developmental Assets are too fragile. Ideally, a community should strive to ensure that all youth experience 31 or more of the 40 Developmental Assets. In your community, 5 percent of students surveyed report 31 or more of the assets (see Figure 19). Had your study included youth who have dropped out of school, the picture of assets would likely be even more somber.

This portrait of Developmental Assets likely mirrors the pattern found in communities across the nation. Regardless of town size or geography, youth typically:

- receive too little support through sustained and positive intergenerational relationships;
- lack opportunities for leadership and involvement;
- disengage from youth-serving programs in the community;
- experience inconsistent or unarticulated boundaries;
- feel disconnected from their community; and
- miss the formation of social competencies and positive values.

As long as this pattern continues, we will see too many young people who are susceptible to risk taking and negative pressure, drawn to less desirable sources of belonging, and ill-equipped to become the next generation of parents, workers, leaders, and citizens. Why are we in this situation? A number of social forces could be at work, including:

- high levels of parental absence in the lives of children;
- adult silence about boundaries and values;
- the fragmentation of many socializing systems;
- age segregation and the general disengagement of the public from building meaningful connections with youth;
- the isolation of people of all ages within neighborhoods;
- over-exposure to the mass media;
- barriers to healthy development such as poverty, lack of access to programs and services, and families ill-equipped to care for their children;
- fear of involvement by adults and a sense that youth are the responsibility of "someone else"; and
- the too-common occurrence of schools, religious institutions, and other youth-serving organizations not adequately equipped to be places of support, caring, and positive challenge.

This combination of factors suggests, among other things, that we are losing our capacity to be communities in which caring, connectedness, and a shared sense of purpose are common-place and a commitment to children dominates public and private life.

## Promoting Developmental Assets

Assets are cumulative or additive—the more, the better. Search Institute's research has consistently shown that the more assets young people have, the less likely they are to be involved in risk-taking behaviors. And, multiple forms of thriving, such as school success, increase as assets increase. Given the power of the Developmental Assets and their current state of disrepair, a commitment to asset building should become a top priority. While many well-intentioned youth development efforts focus on the consequences of asset depletion, unless we place major energy into rebuilding the asset foundation for youth, the problems we now see will persist—and likely increase.

How do we begin the work of strengthening the Developmental Assets for all young people? Through its work with communities across the country, Search Institute has identified six principles to help guide the process.<sup>2</sup>

1. ***All young people need assets:*** While it is crucial to pay special attention to those who have the least (economically or emotionally), **all** children and adolescents will benefit from having more assets than they now have.

2. ***Everyone can build assets:*** Asset development requires positive messages across a community. All adults, youth, and children play a role.

3. ***It's an ongoing process:*** Asset development starts when a child is born and continues through high school and beyond.

4. ***Relationships are key:*** A central key to asset development is strong relationships between adults and young people, young people and their peers, and teenagers and children.

5. ***Consistent messages:*** Asset building requires consistent, positive messages about what is important.

6. ***Redundancy:*** Young people need to hear the same positive messages and feel support over and over again, from many different people.

Asset-building communities mobilize people, organizations, institutions, and systems to take action around a shared understanding of positive development. Figure 20 lists 35 characteristics of asset-building communities. Ultimately, rebuilding and strengthening the developmental infrastructure in a community is not a program run by professionals. It is a movement that creates a community-wide sense of common purpose, places residents and their leaders on the same team moving in the same direction, and creates a culture in which all residents are expected, by virtue of their membership in the community, to promote the positive development of youth.

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<sup>2</sup> Adapted from *Uniting Communities for Youth: Mobilizing All Sectors to Create a Positive Future* by Dr. Peter L. Benson, Search Institute, 1995.

## Taking Action

There is no single model for how a community-wide, asset-building initiative is launched and sustained. However, certain dynamics appear essential. The movement requires a team of people—representing all socializing systems and voices in the community (including youth)—to gather information, plan, and take the lead in mobilizing the community’s asset-building capacity. We recommend these general strategies for getting started:

- **Establish long-term goals and perspective**—Use the information in this report to begin developing a shared community-wide vision of increasing the asset base for all children and adolescents. Strive to increase the average number of assets to 31 or more. Reaching this target cannot be rushed or done with a single new idea or program. It will take a long-term commitment, multiple and coordinated changes, and a passion for the vision that will sustain the efforts.
- **Mobilize the public**—A priority should be communicating the Developmental Assets and their power to all residents of your community—including children and youth—on multiple occasions, using a variety of media.
- **Think intergenerationally**—In all communities, we have become too comfortable with disconnected generations. Opportunities to connect old and young, adults and youth, teenagers and children should be acknowledged and celebrated for their asset-building power.
- **Expand the reach of family education**—Families are a key source of Developmental Assets. All parents and guardians need multiple opportunities to learn about, remember, and build Developmental Assets. Agencies, schools, community education, religious institutions, the media, public health, and other community-based organizations should work together to provide these opportunities, with particular emphasis on promoting responsible fathering.
- **Support and expand current asset-building efforts**—Though they may not use the same vocabulary, many people, places, and programs already build assets. They are found throughout communities in neighborhoods, schools, parks and recreation programs, religious institutions, and youth organizations. Recognizing, publicizing, and supporting these efforts, helps to reinforce their commitment and inspires others to take similar action.
- **Strengthen socializing systems**—Though much asset-building occurs in daily, informal interactions, neighborhoods, schools, religious institutions, youth organizations, and employers must also become more intentional about asset building. Opportunities for training, technical assistance, and networking should be made available in these settings.
- **Empower youth to contribute**—Many youth feel devalued by adults. And most report that their community does not provide useful roles for young people. It should become normative in all settings where youth are involved to seek their input and advice, to make decisions with them, and to treat them as responsible, competent allies in all asset-building efforts.

- **Elevate the importance of service**—It ought to become the norm for children and youth to engage in acts of caring and compassion for others and for the common good through youth organizations, families, neighborhoods, schools, and religious institutions. Service to others both solidifies caring values and provides opportunities for building the assets of social competencies, empowerment, and positive identity. When combined with intentional reflection, it becomes a powerful tool for shaping learning, positive values, and competencies. A goal is to ensure that all youth engage in acts of service many times a year from ages 5-20.

- **Provide places to grow**—Too many youth are disengaged from the kinds of teams, clubs, organizations, and programs that provide safe and active places to develop asset strength. All citizens and their leaders need to rally around the expansion of opportunities, and parents and all adults must encourage and reward involvement.

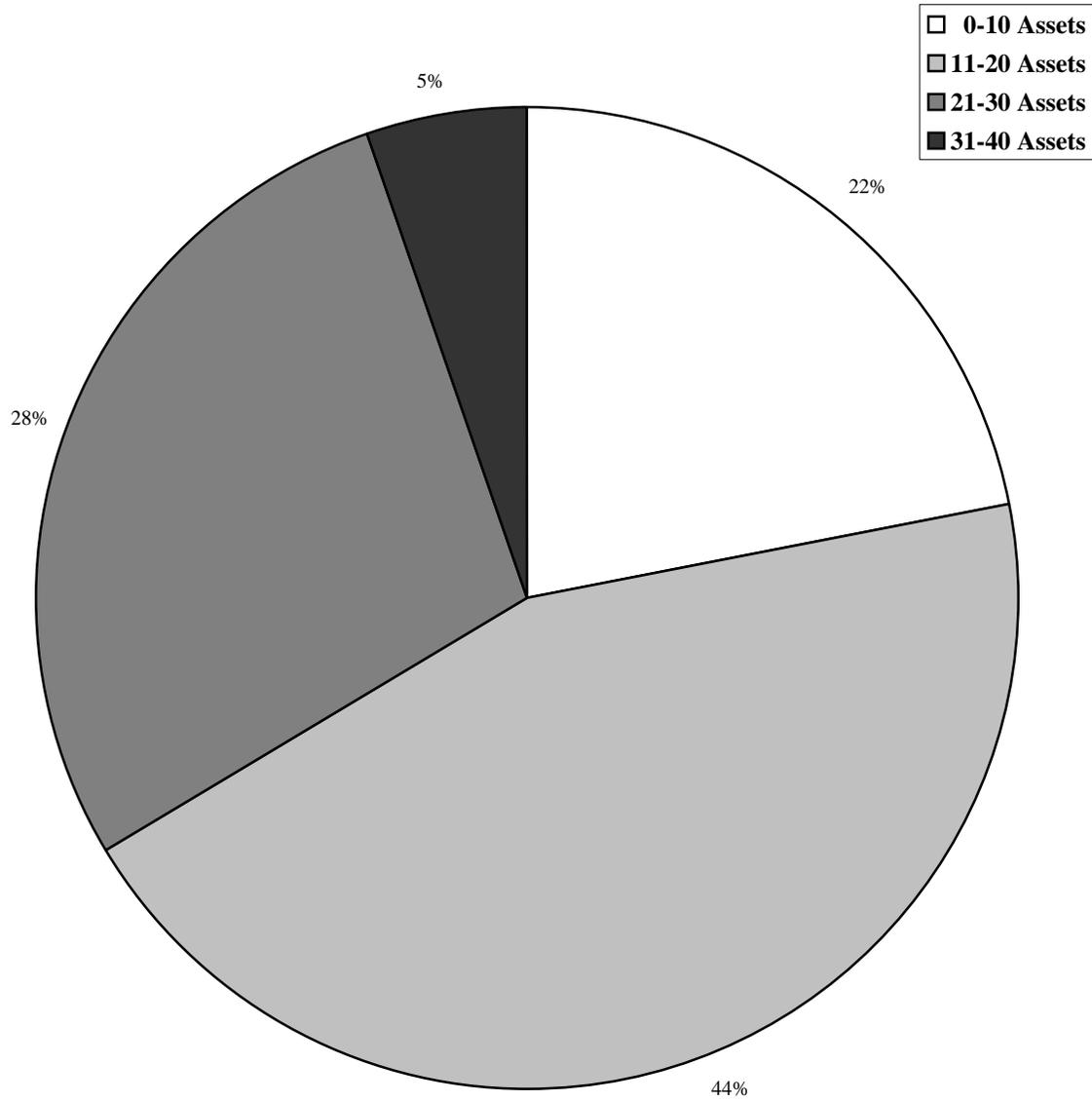
- **Advocate for quality opportunities for young people**—Young people are the responsibility not just of families but of the whole community. It is the responsibility of all citizens—whether they have children or not—to demand, support, and allocate necessary resources for the highest quality schools, pre- and after-school care, and other youth programs. In addition, individuals should be challenged to contribute their time and talent as volunteers in youth programs. Employers should be encouraged to provide incentives for volunteer activity on behalf of children and youth.

- **Begin public dialogue**—It is a formidable task to build public consensus on a common core of shared values and boundaries. Nevertheless, a way must be found to pursue this essential dialogue. While cultural, religious, and political diversity adds richness to these discussions, there is also a shared set of values and boundaries—unknown at this point to all of us—which every community and its people can articulate and uphold. Beginning this process in neighborhoods and apartment buildings, in congregations and community centers, and in other grassroots settings not only leads to broader understanding in the community as a whole, but it also begins to create relationships and connections at the personal level.

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**Figure 19: The Challenge**

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Note. Percentages may not total to 100% due to rounding.

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## Figure 20: 35 Characteristics of Asset-Building Communities

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1. A vision rooted in Developmental Assets is communicated several times a year to all residents.
2. All residents understand their personal capacity to promote Developmental Assets.
3. Most residents take personal responsibility.
4. Most residents take action.
5. New residents are quickly socialized to the community vision.
6. Children and teenagers know the Developmental Assets.
7. Most youth take action to promote assets for themselves and for their peers.
8. The community thinks and acts intergenerationally. Most adults establish sustained relationships with children and adolescents and most adolescents establish sustained relationships with younger children.
9. Youth have many opportunities to lead, make decisions, and give input; youth are provided useful roles in community life. Youth then are actors in the reclaiming of community rather than just objects of programs.
10. All children and teenagers frequently engage in service to others. Much of this "work" is done with adults, and a premium is placed on learning from these experiences (i.e., service-learning).
11. A common core of values is named.
12. Adults model and articulate their values.
13. A common core of boundaries is named.
14. Adults model and articulate these boundaries.
15. Families are supported, taught, and equipped to elevate asset building to top priority.
16. Community programs assist adults – particularly parents – to personally reclaim Developmental Assets.
17. Neighbors and community residents build caring relationships with youth and express this caring through dialogue, listening, commending positive behavior, acknowledging their presence, enjoying their company, and involving them in decision-making. They know neighborhood children and adolescents by name and take time to get to know them.
18. Businesses that employ teenagers address the assets of support, boundaries, values, and social competencies. Employers also develop family-friendly policies and provide mechanisms for employees to build relationships with youth.
19. Religious institutions mobilize their capacity for intergenerational relationships, educating and supporting parents, constructive use of time, values development, and service to the community. They focus on both their own members and the larger community.
20. Schools – both elementary and secondary – place priority on becoming caring environments for all students, providing a challenging and engaging curriculum for all students, providing opportunities for nurturing values deemed crucial by the community, expanding and strengthening co-curricular activities, and using their connections with parents to reinforce the importance of family attention to assets.

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## Figure 20: 35 Characteristics of Asset-Building Communities (Cont'd)

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21. Youth organizations and other service providers train leaders and volunteers in asset-building strategies and provide meaningful opportunities for youth to serve their communities and build citizenship and leadership skills.
22. Local government – through policy, influence, training, and resource allocation – moves asset development and community-wide cooperation to top priorities for planning, policies, and funding allocations within the municipality.
23. The community invests in expanding and strengthening its systems of youth clubs, teams, and organizations
24. Virtually all 7- to 18-year-olds are involved in one or more clubs, teams, or other youth-serving organizations that view building assets as central to their mission.
25. All professionals (e.g., day-care providers, teachers, social workers, religious youth workers) and volunteers (e.g., coaches, mentors) who work with youth receive training in asset building.
26. The media (print, radio, television, internet) repeatedly communicate the community's vision, support local mobilization efforts, and provide forums for sharing innovative actions taken by individuals and organizations.
27. The community prizes cultural strengths and traditions. Particularly for youth of color, this heritage includes the concept of elders, the primacy of intergenerational relationships, respect for figures of authority, the value of caring for others, and a wisdom about what matters. Being in touch with and affirming these strengths represent an important dimension of cultural competence, in addition to knowledge and contact with cultures beyond one's own.
28. Teenagers have safe places "to hang."
29. Families have safe places on weekends and during evenings to receive short-term child care.
30. All children receive frequent expressions of support in both informal public settings and in places where youth gather.
31. The community celebrates the individuals and systems which take innovative action. Youth professionals and volunteers have high status in the life of the community.
32. The community-wide commitment to asset building is long-term and inclusive.
33. The community pays particular attention to helping girls develop assertiveness skills, a sense of personal control and mastery, and healthy self-concept.
34. The community pays particular attention to helping boys develop and express compassion and caring.
35. Current programs which intentionally build assets, such as peer helping, mentoring, and service-learning, are elevated to top priority and expanded to reach a larger number of youth.